

The Marquis and the Moon

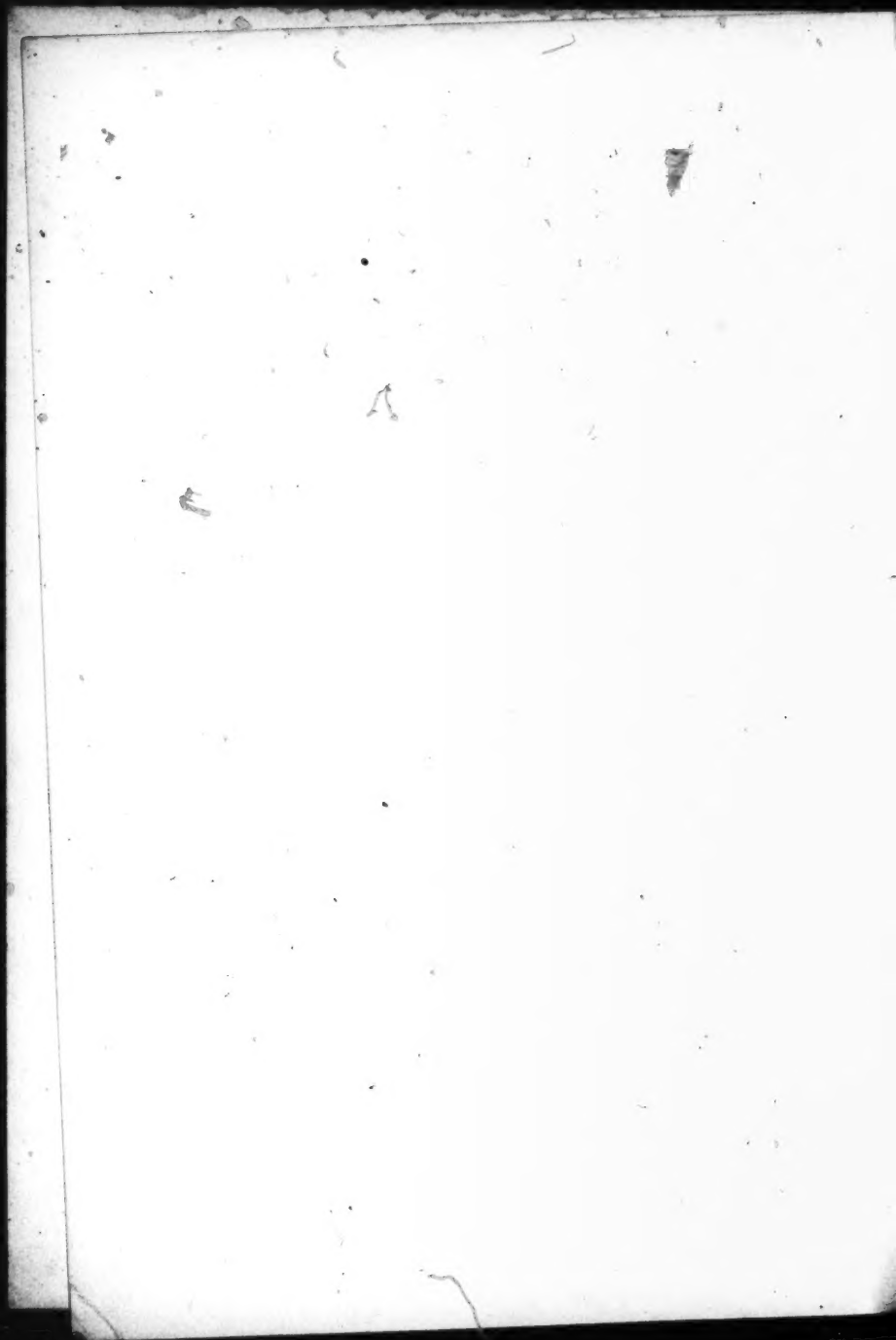
A STORY

BY

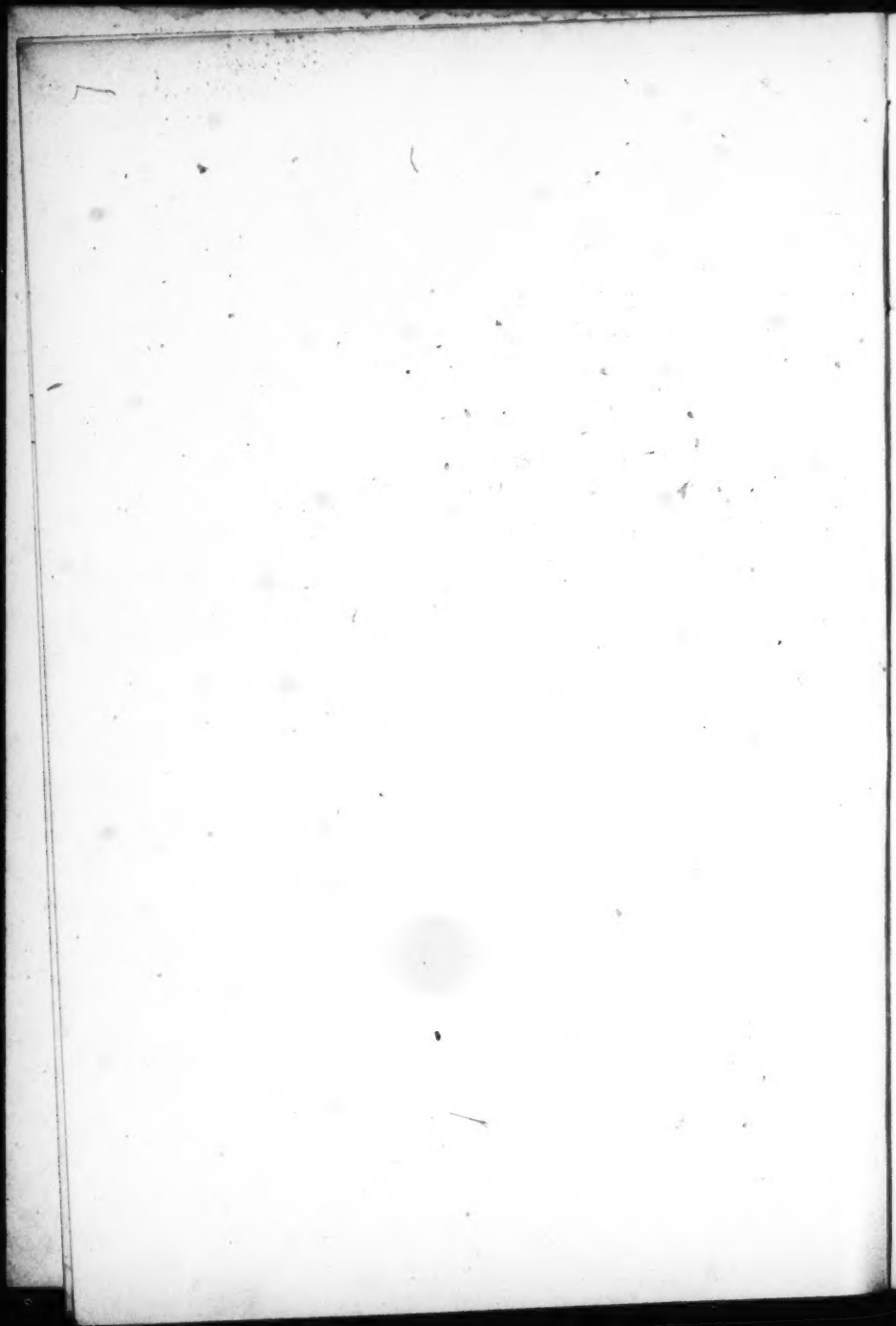
NICHOLAS LONGWORTH

"Mon âme a Dieu, mon cœur a toi"

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THE MARQUIS AND THE MOON.

I.

"Che sciochezza! L'anima non esiste che in corpo sano," said the little Italian sculptor, with a gesticulation.

"Altro! Teodoro mio," answered the tall German artist, who sat behind him, his great blonde beard effective upon his black velvet coat. "The *anima* does not exist at all, either in a well body, or in an ill; and I doubt, my little friend, whether by '*l'anima*' you mean the spirit or the soul—a distinction made by the fool philosophers. Bah! neither exists."

This was in the dingy front room of the ancient Café Greco, in Rome, where half a dozen artist friends, of different nationalities, sat around a little square table under the much-abused fresco of St. Mark's and the Grand Canal, by Whittridge, pipes in their mouths, and bottles of *castelli* before them.

"Well, Fritz," said an Englishman (I could tell by his face and figure that he was English), "what do *you* mean by soul and spirit?"

"I mean nothing," answered the Teuton. "Or rather, I mean that they mean nothing simply because there are no such things. They do not exist. It is the eye, my dear fellow, that sees. It is the ear that hears. The limbs that move. Not any intangible something, behind them, which no one has yet ever been able to discover, that does the seeing, hearing, and moving. What you call the spirit, soul, mind, or what you will, is but the harmony of a perfect mechanism, which straightway ceases to be when that perfection is destroyed."

"But," spoke up a portrait painter from the other side of the table, "has it not been through all time the almost unanimous testimony of mankind, the ignorant as well as the learned, that there is something in us beside the clay of which we are made? Who believes in the truth of the story of Pygmalion, that the mere perfection of form will, of itself, produce or create a soul? If this be true, it behooves us to be careful, Teodoro, lest some day your statues may take a notion to walk out of your studio, and my portraits from their frames."

All this time had been sitting at a neighboring

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table, a little silent man, smoking a cigarette and sipping his black coffee and cognac, apparently paying the closest attention to the discussion of the artists. He was a man of slight and rather insignificant figure, respectably, but by no mean fashionably, dressed, and, with what I can best describe as a very intense expression of face. He might have been anywhere from thirty-five to fifty years of age; though his thick hair, and the slight mustache which covered his thin upper lip, were black as night. Over this latter a thin and very hooked nose hung; so closely, it gave me the impression that the two were fastened together, and might be removed. Such as clowns wear in carnival time.

But what struck me most of all, as I watched him from the other side of the room, where Count Piersanti and I were sitting, were his wonderful eyes. As he sat in the shadow, intently watching the friendly disputants, they were, for all the world, like the eyes of a cat in semi-darkness. The light seemed to come out through them, from within, rather than to be a reflection from outside rays. My own eyes I could not take off him. I could not tell then, and can not explain now, the peculiar fascination which this strange man had for me.

Up to this time his gaze had been fixed, without turning, upon the arguing artists, but now, for the first time, it wandered around the room to the corner where my friend and I sat. With the slightest glance of recognition he nodded to Pier-santi, who saluted him in return, with the effusive politeness almost universal among his country-men.

"Who is that strange looking man?" I asked.

"Don't you know him?" said he. "That is the Marchese Carlo Mazza, from Naples, a very eccentric fellow. He and I were friends, as boys, and went to school together. Then, for a time, he studied at the Propaganda, was noted as a brilliant scholar, and, at one time, announced his intention of joining the Jesuit order. Suddenly, however, he threw up all his plans, and returned to Naples, where he has since lived in utter seclusion. He comes here now but at rare intervals, and, strange to say, repulses the advances of his old friends and schoolmates, and never recognizes any one except with barely a nod of the head. He is sometimes seen by night about the fountain of Trevi, and they tell all manner of strange stories about him. The old women and the contadini believe him to be a wizard, though why they can not tell. There is certainly something uncanny in his ap-

pearance and actions, though, I think, the only trouble with poor Carlo is that his brain is unhinged, and that he is no better or worse than a half lunatic. I should not, at least, recommend him as a desirable acquaintance, although at one time he was a right good fellow."

As if to give the lie to the count's statement, the subject of our conversation arose from his seat, and, approaching us with a smile, more sweet and genial than I should have thought such a face capable of wearing, held out his hand and said, "Why, my dear Pietro, I am delighted to see you again; I hardly recognized you in the dim light of this room. Will not you introduce me to your American friend?" The count shook him heartily with his *left* hand. (I have omitted to say that Piersanti's right arm was gone from the shoulder: from what cause I did not then know, and never had asked, he being very sensitive concerning the mutilation or deformity.)

While making the request, those strange eyes, and that sweet smile, were fixed steadily upon me. He scarcely glanced at my companion. I could not explain the peculiar, the utterly indescribable effect, they had upon me. How did he know that I was an American?

Meanwhile, the discussion proceeded at the neighboring table:

"My friends," said the German artist, "there can be nothing plainer than that thought is merely phosphorus. Feed the brain with phosphorus and it will think. Stimulate it with opium or alcohol, and it will think in an entirely different way. Let some one strike the top of the head with a club, and it will cease to think at all. Bah! there is no such thing as thought, except it be the mere creaking of the machinery."

"Bah! yourself;" responded his English friend, "there is no such thing as *matter*. The ancient philosophers, from Aristotle down, except, perhaps, it be some of those d—d Epicureans, denied its existence, and all of your own German schools have joined them in proving irresistibly that your belief in the existence of matter, or an outside world, is but an illegitimate inference from the known existence of mind or soul. In fine, that the sum and substance of human knowledge is comprised in *Cogito ergo sum*. Which one of those old fellows was it who said that the outward or ectypal world bears the same relation to the inward or archetypal world that shadow bears to substance?"

"Our German friend, yonder," said the marchese—a slight sneer blending with his unchanging

smile—"seems to have been reading the *Kraft und Stoff* of his countryman, the illustrious Büchner. Is it not one of your English poets who makes a character say: 'What fools these mortals be?'"

"Though no admirer of Büchner," I could not help answering, "still less a believer in his doctrines, I should hesitate long before calling him a fool."

"Will you pardon me, signore, if I ask what then your belief may be?"

"I am as sure," replied I, "of the existence of the soul, as I am of the existence of the body, and I believe that no possible proof can be given of the reality of the outward world, which can not also be given of the real existence of the soul; and I do not think there is a child capable of understanding any thing who may not understand this."

My strange acquaintance smiled more sweetly than before, and courteously inclined his head.

"So far, caro signore, I am entirely with you," replied he, "but I can not by any means limit myself to *one* soul, when it is manifest that each individual among us possesses fifty souls, or at least as many as the body possesses separate and distinct functions. With the death or destruction of one function of the body, the soul appertaining thereto

perishes with it, or, at least, parts company with its fellow souls, who thereafter know it no more. This, I say, is capable not only of demonstration, but of ocular proof."

What my friend, the count, had said, concerning the speaker's morbid mental condition, now recurred to me. There was, however, in his expression, especially in his eyes, which grew more luminous as he spoke, and even in the tone of his voice, something that held me spellbound, and I could no more resist him than can the fluttering bird the charming snake.

"May I ask," said I, "what you mean by *ocular* proof?"

"If you will honor me with half an hour of your time, and walk with me as far as the fountain of Trevi, I will engage to furnish you with it."

"I deeply regret the impossibility," I answered, "but the Count and myself are engaged to dine at the Molaro at seven, and it now lacks but ten minutes of that time."

"I will engage to bring you back at half past six."

"Half past six to-morrow morning would be rather late," laughed I.

"Pardon me," he said gravely, "I refer to half

past six this evening. I will bring you back *twenty minutes ago.*"

Count Piersanti looked very gravely at me and slightly shook his head.

I then thought this action on his part had reference to his friend's supposed insanity, which at that time appeared to me beyond doubt.

The marchese rose, threw his long and somewhat threadbare black cloak about him, and, with his hat still in hand, and his eyes, which now looked more like stars than human organs of vision, said:

"Caro signore, will you go with me?"

I could no more resist going than the magnetic needle can resist the pole. We approached the door of exit.

"Are you not coming with us?" said my guide, turning toward Piersanti, with his hand upon the latch.

"Not I, grazia," the count replied, a strange expression on his face, almost like fear, and pointing with his left hand to the empty socket from which his right arm once hung. "Not I! Buona notte, amici miei. Felice ritorno!"

We went out into the darkness of the narrow Via dei Condotti, thence across the noble Piazza di

Spagna, glorious in the superb Italian moonlight, and then entered the cold shadows of the Via due Maccelle, in the direction of the fountain of Trevi.

II.

Was any thing more superb ever seen than that glorious Moon, shining from the clear Italian sky?

It seemed ten times larger than I had ever seen it before. Its brilliant rays falling on the fountain, changed all the moss-grown, grotesque statues into figures of pure alabaster, and the rushing cascade into a stream of molten silver.

So intense were the rays of light, they seemed a solid stairway of gold, leading from the glittering basin up to their celestial source.

"Listen," I said, "to yonder cascade, and the splash of those tiny waves. They seem to be talking together in some unknown tongue. I am almost sure I heard a little mocking laugh just now. Could it have been a pixie or a kelpie?"

The marchese made no reply, but, in another moment, spoke, with a little sarcasm in his laugh.

"I have heard that one of your countrymen

claims to have invented a means of telegraphing messages along rays of light. Truly a poor and pitiful invention. I suppose, however, the only use to which the cold, dull rays of an American moon could be put. Here, however, under an Italian sky, by those skilled in the art, first taught by the priests of Iran, bodies, having considerable extension and weight, can be transmitted, along the moon's rays, at an incredible rate of speed; the motive power used being a preparation of *green electricity* in a highly concentrated form."

"And what may that be?" said I.

"I will show you," answered my strange acquaintance, taking from his pocket a small vial, which he held before me. It contained a pale green liquid, clear as crystal, which emitted a phosphorescent glow, just such as came from the eyes of him who held it.

"Would you like to try its effects?" he said, smiling more strangely than ever. "On my word, it is perfectly harmless."

He took from his pocket a small silver cup, and, stooping, filled it with water from the sparkling basin. Into this he poured a small quantity of the glistening liquid, and held it toward me.

Just then we heard the sound of many feet, and a company of *bersagliari* came down the Via delle

Stamperie, on the double quick, and crossed the square on the way to their barracks.

"Wait a moment, until those animals have passed by," growled Mazza.

Up hobbled an old beggar woman, and holding out her withered hand, begged a *soldo*.

"Va Via! Canaglia!" hissed the marchese, in a towering rage.

The crone, raising her eyes to his face, shivered from head to foot, and, making the sign which avoids the evil eye, hurried away as fast as her feeble legs could carry her.

"Santa Vergine!" muttered she, "it is the *Stregone*."

We were alone. The piazza was silent and deserted, except by ourselves. The moon above shone with redoubled splendor. It was not quite at the full, though almost so.

He again held the cup to me.

"But are you not also to drink?" I asked.

"My own system," answered Mazza, "is so saturated and permeated with this divine fluid, as to make it wholly unnecessary. Drink, and, while doing so, keep your eyes fixed on mine."

I drained the tiny cup.

Instantly I felt as though ten thousand little needles were pricking me gently from crown to

toe, and innumerable tiny sparks seemed scintillating from my body. Then a delicious, happy feeling came over me. I was light as air, able to do any thing, and all doubts concerning Mazza vanished from me. My faith in his power was complete.

"Now, take my hand," he said, stepping upon the solid ray of light, "I will help you up. Now recline yourself; it is soft as a couch of feathers. Andiamo!"

As we shot upward, Rome lay at our feet, bathed in the divine rays upon which we were traveling. Trinità dei Monti, the Pincio, the dome of St. Peter's, and towering Janiculum, with its white villas, and the dark groves of the Villa Borgese were glorified in its radiance. Thence, across the undulating Campagna, we could see the beautiful Alban hills on the one hand, and on the other, Civita Vecchia and the silver sea. A moment more and all objects had become minute. Still I could just discern the tiny Alps, the Atlas range, and the glistening Mediterranean, winding from the Pillars of Hercules to the Bosphorus. Another instant and all objects melted confusedly together, into one shining, golden ball, like another moon, though of infinitely greater size.

"We go slow," remarked my new acquaintance,

"owing to the resistance of the earth's atmosphere. We are about to leave it now. I fear you may suffer some inconvenience in passing through something over two hundred thousand miles of vacuum, but the journey will be accomplished in eighty seconds; so hold your breath, as I shall mine, and keep up a stout heart."

I began to gasp for breath. We had left the air behind us; the time seemed endless. We were apparently stationary. I knew, however, this could not be so, and I vaguely remembered how, when once in a balloon, a windstorm striking us, the earth seemed to fly away beneath, while the car remained stationary.

I could bear it no more; I gasped convulsively, once or twice, and became unconscious.

III.

I awoke outstretched upon a huge rock. Mazza was chafing my temples. I opened my eyes, and saw, far above me, an enormous golden crescent in the sky.

"Why! there is the Moon," I cried, "I thought I was in the Moon!"

"So you are, my dear fellow," he answered. "Yonder planet is the Earth. See how large it is, and how luminous, although now but a thin crescent."

"I had supposed," said I, "that, the Moon being full, the Earth would be in shadow, and invisible to us."

"So it would be," replied he, "but you possibly remember that, as we watched this planet from the fountain, we observed that it was not quite at the full. This accounts for yonder thin crescent."

I rubbed my eyes. My senses had completely returned.

"How is this?" I exclaimed. "Did I not faint for want of air? Yet here I am all right again, and there is no air surrounding the Moon."

"A vulgar error, my dear sir, given currency by poor spy-glass peepers two hundred thousand miles away. True, the atmosphere here is much rarer and more subtle than the gross vapors which enfold our Earth, but no less able to sustain animal life, indeed, more so.

"Even now the more observant of those spy-glass men have seen reason to change their former opinion, and to retract the *ex cathedra* statements, concerning which they were once so positive. Did not M. Lansaudet, when observing the total eclipse

of the Sun, in 1860, discover that the horns of the solar crescent were *truncated and rounded near the Moon's limb*? Is it not admitted by them all, moreover, that *the apparent and visible diameter of the Moon is 2.0" greater than its actual diameter*? How, I ask you, can these things be accounted for except upon the theory, which you now perceive to be the fact, that an atmosphere does surround the Moon? This fact is openly acknowledged by Prof. C. P. Boyle, of New York, who maintains that the Moon not only has a slight atmosphere, but that she also has water in the shape of small ponds, which for optical reasons, are not always visible through the telescope, but have occasionally been seen by astronomers as bright sparkling points. As to this latter conclusion, he is in error."

"Is there then no water in the Moon?" I asked, not without apprehension.

"Plenty of it, be not alarmed, amico mio," laughed Mazza, seeing my troubled expression. It is, however, all below the surface. Listen."

I placed my ear to the rock, and distinctly heard the roar of a torrent far down below the surface.

"That," said my guide, "is the mighty river *Alf*, the only lunar stream, the sound of whose waters

inspired Coleridge, when he returned to Earth, to pen those wonderful lines :

' In Xanadu did Kubna Kahn,
A stately pleasure dome decree,
Where Alf, the sacred river ran,
Through caverns, measureless to man,
Down to a sunless sea.'

" Now turn your eyes to yonder sterile arid waste. That was once the plain and forest of Xanadu, more fertile and lovely than any vale upon Earth. Yonder desolate peak and range of rock are *Bulialdus*. That still farther on is *Lubiniesky*. We stand on *Tycho*. Observe, beyond that second peak, two ridges, or arcs of circles, whose centers are not coincident, and whose curvature is toward the north. These are *glacial moraines*, and correctly pronounced to be such by the spy-glass peepers. Now, how on earth do they, admitting the existence of these *moraines*, while denying to the Moon both atmosphere and water, account for the departure of the vast glaciers, or the water into which they must have melted? Without air it could not have evaporated. Did it flow away into space, into an absolute vacuum, and lose itself among the stars? Does not this, even to your untutored understanding, look very much like an

absurdity? No, my dear sir, it simply went below the surface, and now flows underground, just as the waters of the Earth have begun to do. I remember once reading an interesting treatise (written by one of your countrywomen, if I mistake not) upon the diminution of water upon the Earth's surface, although I can not, perhaps, agree in all its conclusions.

"Undoubtedly, after a time, the processes which have produced the results you see here, will reduce the Earth to the same condition. But not a drop of water will wander away into space. No created atom of matter ever did, or ever shall cease to exist. The idea, my dear sir, is too absurd. Are you not, yourself, aware that, near your own home, in the valley of Millcreek, a river flows some hundreds of feet below the surface, which once watered the roots of trees, along its beautiful course, to join the then majestic Ohio?"

"Great Heavens!" cried I, starting to my feet. "Mysterious man, whoever, or whatever you may be, what know you of my home, or of that valley?"

The marchese smiled, but made no answer.

"You may, perhaps, wonder," said he, "how this subterranean river is supplied, in a world where rain never falls, and from which aqueous vapors

never arise. Nothing can be more easy of explanation. The 'sunless sea,' of which Coleridge spoke, into which the *Alf* falls, is so far below the surface, and so near to the internal fires, which occupy the central portion of this globe, that its waters are converted into steam, as fast as supplied. This steam, passing upward through the innumerable caverns of its rocky crust, is condensed again on approaching the surface, and appears in the form of countless brooks and springs, once more supplying the flood, which thus perennially flows onward to the lunar ocean. The process is, to all intents and purposes, the same as that which takes place by evaporation and condensation in an atmospheric medium, by which yonder far off planet, the Earth, is watered. But come, it is time we were going."

"Where?" I asked.

"To the summit."

I looked above. Towering over our heads for some thousand feet, was an impassable (or what I took to be an impassable) wall of huge shapeless rocks.

"We can never climb there," I cried.

"Nothing more easy, believe me." And Mazza lightly leaped into the air, and stood upon a rock,

thirty feet above me, laughing, and holding out his hand. "Come on."

I braced myself for a supreme effort and leaped.

To my utter surprise, I stood beside him upon the rugged mass of volcanic rock, feeling that I had exerted myself unnecessarily.

"What does this mean?" I asked. "Is it the effect of the *green electricity*, or is it the slight resistance of this attenuated atmosphere that renders such a feat possible?"

"The effect of the electricity has passed away by this time," he replied. "The other cause may have somewhat to do with it, but the real reason ought to have suggested itself to you. By the way, my dear sir, I find you much duller of comprehension than I had been led to suppose."

"Led to suppose," cried I. "By whom?— You have never seen me before to-night."

The marchese smiled. "Surely," said he, "you must be aware that the Moon is of very much smaller bulk and weight than the Earth. I should think it ought to have suggested itself to you, that the power or attraction of gravity would be less by the exact ratio of its weight. Oh, yes. Traveling here is easy enough, when up there, at home (point-

ing to the gorgeous crescent in the sky), it is impossible."

"You say 'at home,' marchese. Which is your home, the Earth or the Moon?"

"I pass much of my time in each, caro mio. Piersanti is right when he says that I am only a *half lunatic*. Let us go on."

So we went on and up, until we stood, breathless, but not fatigued, upon the dizzy edge of what seemed to be the crater of an extinct volcano.

It was of vast extent, circular, or almost so in form. The surrounding walls were of precipitous black rock, some thousand feet in height. Below was a flat floor of smooth white sand and pebbles; in the center of which arose a cone-shaped something, which I at first took to be the last work of the expiring volcano, now extinct. I had seen in photographs of the moon, by Rutherford and others, and also through the larger telescopes, such formations in most of the lunar craters, but of this one alone, I can speak from actual observation near at hand.

It was of the same form, and about the same size, as the Pyramid of Cheops, and as I observed it more closely, I clearly perceived it to be the work of human hands, and, unlike the Pyramid, appar-

ently erected at no distant day, and of perfectly polished black marble.

"That," said Mazza, "is the palace of the Princess."

"What princess? Can we enter the palace?" cried I.

"It was for that you were sent for," answered my strange guide.

Forthwith I began to bound down the precipice, leaping from rock to rock, like a mountain goat, having now learned how light I was. This time followed by my guide, instead of following him. In a few moments we stood at the base of the pyramid, before an enormous double gate of bronze, beside which hung a shield of some polished metal, and a huge hammer chained to the wall.

"Strike!"

I took the hammer, and, whirling it around my head, struck the shield with my full strength.

It emitted a rich, sweet, musical sound, like that of the great bells in Chinese temples.

Slowly the gates swung apart, disclosing a lofty, dimly lighted hall. Through this we passed, and reached another door of hammered silver. This was covered with all manner of strange, and, to me, undecipherable inscriptions and characters, deeply cut into the metal. No shield hung before

these doors, but, as we approached, they slowly opened, and at the same time we heard the outer gates close behind us with a heavy clang. Awestricken, I entered the vast hall of the Princess of the Moon.

IV.

The hall was dimly illuminated by the *earthlight*, which streamed in through many hundred narrow slits or loopholes, cut through the great thickness of the walls, which I had not observed from without.

So vast were its dimensions, and so faint the illumination, that I could but dimly discern the forms and faces of the innumerable, silent throng that filled it. Nor indeed, had I time or inclination to do so. All stretched away beyond the central point of light, into blackness, a sea of heads and faces.

That central point was a slightly raised dais or platform, whereon was a chair of ivory. Behind this chair stood two tall, strange, motionless figures, holding aloft torches, which gave out a white lambent light, making every thing, in their imme-

diate neighborhood, bright as day; but not penetrating far into the darkness of the vast hall.

On either side of the chairstood a figure; afrites, I think, such as I used to read of when a boy, in the Arabian Nights. These were black, of great stature, and each held a double handed sword, their blades gleaming blue in the torchlight.

The floor was of beautifully polished, tessellated marble, but, in its center, about ten paces before the throne, yawned a black pit, perhaps ten feet in width, as though a portion of the foundation rock had lately given way, and carrying the pavement with it, fallen into the subterranean river, whose roaring could be faintly heard in the far depths below.

Ah! how can I describe—what hand could paint—what voice or pen portray the form that sat, or half reclined, in that ivory chair?

The figure was slight, of exquisite grace and mold, clad in a clinging robe of some rich white web and woof, but without ornament of any kind. Her tender cheek rested lightly upon her right hand, the delicate arm which supported it half showing through the rich drapery. Her left rested upon the arm of her chair.

The torches above her head shone upon her dark hair, leaving the sweet and gentle face—al-

most a baby face in its sweetness and gentleness—in half shadow. One delicate foot rested upon a lion, carved from black marble, which served as her footstool. Her lips were parted as though to speak, and her dark eyes looked at me. Oh! those eyes! So deep, and soft, and tender. The reader must pardon my powerless pen. I only know, I can not tell why, that, looking into their depths, I could have died for her.

I felt Mazza's touch upon my shoulder.

"Advance, and speak to the Princess, but take care of that pit before you?"

I passed by the opening, and dropped on one knee before her footstool.

"Arise;" she said "these empty formalities have place only in the Earth. They are unknown in the Moon. Rise up and speak to me."

Heaven, she spoke in my own, dear, native tongue, not in the bastard Latin of Rome, and—and—Great God! was not that voice strangely familiar to my ear?

"We poor mortals," stammered I.

A smile came over that sweet face as she raised her finger to interrupt me.

"I am mortal like yourself," she said. "Still more, I was born and lived upon the Earth as you do. How or when I came hither it matters not to

say, and if I shall ever revisit my dear *Terra*, who can tell? It is long since I have seen it, and many of its ways and customs I have forgotten; still more have doubtless changed. Tell me something of them? Tell me, is it still possible, there, to love at first sight?"

"Sweet Princess," I answered, with difficulty restraining my earthborn instinct to drop again upon my knee, "there is no other way but that. The so-called love which springs from acquaintance and knowledge of character is at best, with us, but an exalted friendship, worth perhaps as much as love, many think worth more. Not I. But it is not love. Real love bursts instantly into being, as its divine mother arose suddenly in her glory from the sea, and, like her, it is immortal."

A soft smile, sad and tender, stole over that lovely face. She said:

"My servant has brought you hither to learn the true philosophy of life. Do you wish to learn the lesson?"

"Perhaps, Princess, I have learned it already."

Did a faint tinge of color come into her cheek? I can not be certain. The face was in half shadow.

"Have you courage," she asked, "to go through

the necessary ordeal? It may seem to you a frightful one."

"I have courage, sweet Princess, to do any thing, and to go through any thing you bid me."

"Nay, I do not bid you," she answered, "it is for you to choose."

"I choose the ordeal then, whatever it may be."

She made a sign. The afrite on her right approached and stood beside me. Raising his shining sword, he swung it three times around, and, with a swift and sweeping stroke, severed my head from the shoulders. It fell to the floor and rolled to the Princess' footstool.

Strange as it may seem, I suffered no pain whatever: on the contrary, rather a languid sensation of dreamy pleasure. The power to think and reason remained strong and clear, as before, in my brain, as it lay there in the dissevered head.

I watched to see what would happen next.

The gigantic afrite again raised his sword, (I observed that it was not bloody), and lopped off one arm, then another, one leg, and then another, then flung the several members toward different quarters of the hall. Still I felt no pain and saw no blood. Last he cleft my panting bosom, and, drawing forth my heart, laid it, with a deep reverence, upon the princess' footstool, and placed her delicate little

foot upon it. I could see it palpitating under that light pressure. Then first I saw a few drops of blood.

Mazza advanced.

"Are you not now convinced, amico mio, of the truth of my psychological proposition? Is there not one soul that thinks in your brain over yonder, another, loving and longing, in the heart you see beating under our princess' foot? You can see from where you stand (I beg pardon, signore, from where you lie), each separate soul in your several limbs, prompting them to writhe and crawl along the floor? Is it not so?"

"I begin to think," replied I, "that there may be some sense in what you say."

I could only endeavor to articulate this. The motion of the lips was understood. The vocal organs were, for the time, useless.

"Enough," said the Princess. She motioned the affrite on her left hand.

He advanced; picked up the legs and set the trunk upon them. They knit together instantly. He passed his hand over the gash in the breast. It closed and healed. Then he attached either arm.

To my dismay the body turned around and began to walk away.

"Stop!" cried the Princess. It continued to

walk toward the door through which we had entered. Then it began to run. I became deeply, painfully interested.

The afrite leaped forward and seized the body to bring it back. It resisted and struggled.

I had been, in my day, a very muscular and active man, and, from where I lay, I watched with no small interest the struggle of my physical man with the gigantic afrite, spirit, demon, or whatever he might be.

I was powerless in his grasp. He carried me back to where I lay. That is he carried my body back to where my head lay. Then carefully raising the latter, he placed it upon the severed neck.

In an instant I stood before the Princess, sound and whole.

"Thank you," she said. "Were you much terrified learning your lesson?"

"Only a little, dear lady. What shall I do next?"

"Ah! Nothing more. You must go back to Italy now. Farewell."

Her smile seemed sad, but inexpressibly tender and sweet.

She bent slightly forward, half extending her hand, as though to permit me to kiss it.

The afrites stepped before her chair and interposed their swords, crossed between her and me.

Involuntarily I stepped back from those gleaming blades. Too far. I made a desperate effort to regain my footing; and then, with a stifled cry, fell backward into the black chasm.

VI.

Down! down! down! The rushing of waters came nearer! nearer! nearer! Then, with a dash and splash, I sunk deep into the sacred river. Swift and strong it carried me through its rocky chasms; down toward the "sunless sea."

No hope now, thought I. And yet I can not believe that she could send me thus to destruction.

Then, to my astonishment I found that I did not drown. Was the water air, or was I a fish? I breathed it with delight. It was more delicious and invigorating than atmosphere. It was warm and laved my limbs as though caressing them. Over cascades, through whirlpools, it carried me along, laughing (I could not help myself), so great was the sensuous pleasure.

How long this lasted I can not tell.

Then I began to weary of the darkness and long for light.

The wish had hardly formed itself when I perceived a dull, grey light, rapidly becoming paler. Then the the current slackened; and, at last, when I could see open sky above me, turned cold and ceased to flow. I could no longer breathe, and began to choke. It was like earthly water now. I made a strong effort to rise to the light; half drowned, raised my head above the surface; shook it, and looked around.

I was standing, waist-deep, in the fountain of Trevi. On the margin stood Piersanti.

"Mio caro," cried he, "what are you doing there?"

"I don't know," I answered. "What are you doing here?"

"Immediately after you left the Café Greco I determined to follow you and try to persuade you to have no more to do with my crazy school-mate. It is not three minutes since, I ran all the way."

I stepped ashore and shook the water from my dripping clothes.

"What time is it, Piersanti?"

He looked at his watch and his face became like ashes.

"Half past six; and I left the café at five minutes to seven. Something must be the matter with my watch."

Just then the melodious bells of the Trinità dei Monti rang out *half past six*. I turned and looked aloft at the Moon, and kissed my hand.

We reached the Molaro. The porter, gorgeous in gold braid, stood at the entrance door. He looked astonished at my dripping clothes; but, like a true Italian, was too polite to make any comment.

"By the way," said I, addressing him, "do you happen to know, for porters in Rome know every thing, at what hotel the Marchese Carlo Mazza is staying?"

"Certainly, Excellency. He has been here for the last three days; but left this afternoon for Naples. I myself accompanied him to the station, with his luggage, and saw him safely off."

"This, my dear Count," said I, "may not be as wide as a barn door, or as deep as a well, but it will do. It is too much for me. I feel a little cold. Will you allow me to change my wet clothes. I shall join you at dinner in twenty minutes."

"Certainly. A rivederte."

VII.

Piersanti's face wore a troubled expression, and he spoke little during dinner, but drank more wine than was his habit. When we had adjourned to the smoking-room for coffee, he said:

"My dear friend, I can not tell how glad I am to see you returned here perfectly sound and well?"

"Why should I not be sound and well?" I asked.

He leaned forward and whispered in my ear:

"This is in confidence, dear friend. No one has ever yet returned from the journey you have just taken, without leaving something behind him." Then, in a lower whisper, "That d—d fiend who put me together forgot to give me my right arm, and in the confusion of the moment I failed to notice it. Santo Diavolo! I shall never get it back. The English poet, Coleridge, left a portion of his brain. You are the only exception to this rule."

"Not at all, Pietro. I have not returned by any means sound and whole. I left there the most important part of myself, *my heart*."

"Are you in earnest?"

"Never more so in my life."

"Body of Bacchus! Did you forget that?"

"No."

The count started to his feet, and pulled out his watch.

"Come! Come! A train leaves at eight for Naples. We have just time to catch it. We may yet trace out that Mazza. There is still a chance."

"Sit down, my dear boy," said I "can't you see how those Englishmen are staring at you?"

"Maledetta canaglia! They can not understand us."

"These cigars are excellent, and the chartreuse is good. Have you ever been to the convent of the Carthusian Monks, who make it? It is near Florence?"

"If you do not take this present chance, you will never recover your heart."

"Certainly not."

"The princess is in the Moon. You can never see her again."

"Who knows?"

"Your heart is lost forever."

"Undoubtedly."

"Yet you sit there as if you had no desire to regain it."

"None whatever."

"Well," said the excited Italian, resuming his seat, "you Americans are the strangest race under the Sun."

"Or under the Moon," thought I.

FINIS.